

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



March 5, 2002

REFUGEE COORDINATOR LETTER NO: 02-02

TO: COUNTY REFUGEE COORDINATORS

Pleased be advised that the next Refugee Coordinators' meeting has been scheduled as follows:

Date: Tuesday, April 16th, 2002

Time: 10:00 – 3:00

Place: Eureka Room, CDSS Training Center
815 S Street
Corner of 8th and "S" Streets

For your convenience, a copy of the draft minutes from the last meeting is enclosed for your review.

Please submit all agenda items for the upcoming meeting. Address or fax your agenda items to:

Mr. Daniel Crawford
Refugee Programs Branch
California Department of Social Services
744 P St., MS 6-646
Sacramento, CA 95814
FAX (916) 654-7187

If there are any questions, please contact Mr. Daniel Crawford at (916) 654-5964.

Sincerely,

THUAN NGUYEN, Chief
Refugee Programs Branch

Enclosure

Minutes
January 17, 2002
County Refugee Coordinators Meeting Attendees

John Tran	Alameda County
Janet Thompkins	Contra Costa County
Pao Ly	Fresno County
Hilda Guillen	Los Angeles County
Dolores Mejia	Orange County
Long Thai Nguyen	Sacramento County
Regina Maschka	San Diego County
Karen Hart	San Francisco County
An Tran	San Joaquin County
Phaivanh Khowong	Santa Clara County
Alette Lundeberg	Santa Clara County
Nancy Schou	Yolo County
Jan Wolff	Yolo County
Yuliya Balabanova	Yolo County
Thuan Nguyen	RPB Chief
Phyllis Iwasaki	RPB Technical Services
Lenore Schmidt	RPB Operations
Roger Caron	RPB Operations
Brad Elftmann	RPB Technical Services
Linda Keene	RPB Policy
Steve Saucedo	RPB Operations
Betts Smith	RPB Policy

Thuan Nguyen, Chief Refugee Programs Branch, opened the meeting at 10:00 A.M. Participants introduced themselves and agenda items followed.

RCA Regulations Update

Betts Smith advised the group that the new state RCA regulations are to be published in the register on January 25, 2002. Public hearings of the regulations will be held on March 13, 2002 in Sacramento County. A date has not yet been set for additional public hearings that will be held in Los Angeles County.

RESS Eligible Counties

Brad Elftmann advised the participants that ORR will be announcing the proposed RESS allocations sometime in April or May 2002. Brad acknowledged the drop in new arrivals and indicated that RPB has no idea as to what the new allocations will be. He then talked about threshold levels and provided a handout showing how counties would be affected under various threshold scenarios ranging from 700 to 400.

Refugee Coordinators Meeting Minutes

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Thuan Nguyen stated she is flexible on the matter and requested county input, via e-mail, prior to making a final decision. Thuan emphasized she is seeking consensus in establishing the threshold level. A general discussion ensued but nothing was finalized. Brad closed with a request to get comments in ASAP so the decision can be made prior to the receipt of the RESS and TA allocations that are due out at approximately the same time.

DMV Identification Card Processing

Linda Keene advised everyone that RPB has established a new agency contact in regards to the issue of delayed processing of ID cards for refugee clients. She referenced the e-mail she sent to the coordinators on the matter and made a request for county input on the extent of the problem locally. RPB will coordinate the responses and forward them to the national office.

ORR Conference Call

Thuan Nguyen advised the group that she is going to have a conference call with ORR on January 24, 2002. She then asked for e-mail input from individual coordinators on any issues deemed important enough for inclusion in the conference call.

Hate Crime Status Report

Linda Keene provided an information update. The December 20, 2001 memorandum from Bruce Wagstaff, Deputy Director, Welfare to Work Division to Rita Saenz, Director, State Department of Social Services, Subject: Update to Refugee Programs Branch Plan to Promote Community Harmony, was passed out and discussed.

Thuan Nguyen indicated that the 2000 Refugee Works contract for MAA Capacity Building has a small amount of unspent monies that may be redirected to training in the areas of crisis management and media interface to defuse local tension. The Refugee Works contract runs through September 30, 2002.

RPB Staff Assignments

Thuan Nguyen provided an overview of branch assignments and reviewed the functions of the Policy, Operations, Community Development and Fiscal Services units. A draft summary covering unit responsibilities was handed out. The final version will be posted on the RPB website.

2002 Refugee Information Exchange Conference

Phyllis Iwasaki provided a status update. The proposed theme for this year's conference is, America: Our New Home. The tentative dates are September 3-6, 2002. The anticipated location is San Diego. Phyllis requested input on ideas for possible workshops and other activities that could be included as part of the conference. Thuan Nguyen reaffirmed the importance of the annual conference and addressed the need for added frugality this year due to the state budget crisis. She also indicated that it was her desire to continue with the annual Women's Leadership Training if possible.

Refugee Health Issues

Laura Hardcastle reported that the state Health Department is working diligently to expand health assessments in light of the dramatic fall-off in new refugee arrivals. She expressed particular concern about losing the established health delivery infrastructure as a result of the current lull in client flow. To this end, the state Health Department is putting increased emphasis on provision of interpreter services and medical interpreter training with available funding. She also voiced concern about the low pay that is received by medical outreach workers.

County Comments/Roundtable (County Refugee Coordinators)

The customary roundtable discussion followed wherein refugee coordinators provided brief status reports on activities within their counties' refugee services programs.

Closing

The next Coordinators meeting is tentatively scheduled for sometime in April 2002 at a yet to be determined location